

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 MCT-02 SES-02 SAA-01 SSM-03
IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 ACDA-12
DOE-15 SOE-02 /126 W
-----097810 041826Z /42

R 041738Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5771
INFO USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY JIDDA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 24549

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: FR, IZ, PINS
SUBJECT: POPULAR REVULSION AT ARAB TERRORISTS SHOULD
NOT AFFECT FRENCH-ARAB TIES

REF: PARIS 24098 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: EVENTS IN THE LAST FEW DAYS HAVE FOCUSED
PUBLIC ATTENTION IN FRANCE ON THE TERRORIST ACTIVITIES
OF PALESTINIANS AND OTHER ARABS INVOLVED IN THE MIDDLE
EAST DISPUTE. THE EFFECT HAS BEEN A GENERAL REVUL-
SION HERE THAT FRANCE MAY HAVE BECOME AN ARENA FOR
TERRORIST ACTIVITIES. THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT HAS RESPON-
DED THROUGH STATEMENTS IN KEEPING WITH THE PUBLIC
MOOD, BUT THE FRENCH ARE WELL AWARE OF THEIR NEED TO
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MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE ARAB STATES, AND WILL
MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO SEE THAT TERRORIST ACTIVITIES DO
NOT HAVE A NEGATIVE EFFECT ON THOSE RELATIONS. END
SUMMARY.

2. FOLLOWING THE DEATH OF A FRENCH POLICEMAN, AP-
PARENTLY KILLED BY IRAQI EMBASSY "SECURITY GUARDS"

FOLLOWING THE ARREST OF A PALESTINIAN TERRORIST (REFTEL), IT WAS DISCOVERED THAT THE THREE "SECURITY GUARDS" CONCERNED, WHO HAD BEEN ARRESTED AND WERE BEING QUESTIONED, ACTUALLY HAD DIPLOMATIC STATUS AND COULD NOT BE PROSECUTED IN FRANCE. THIS NEWS PROVOKED AN EMOTIONAL PUBLIC RESPONSE HERE, AND THE POLICE, FEARING THEIR COLLEAGUE'S KILLERS WOULD GO UNPUNISHED, ORGANIZED ONE OF THE FEW PROTEST DEMONSTRATIONS THEY HAVE EVER HELD. THE GOVERNMENT NEVERTHELESS DEPORTED THE THREE IRAQIS UNDER HEAVY GUARD, WITH PRIME MINISTER BARRE MAKING A PUBLIC STATEMENT CALLING ON IRAQ TO PROSECUTE THEM.

3. THE FOLLOWING DAY, AUGUST 3, TWO TERRORISTS ATTACKED THE PLO OFFICE HERE AND ASSASINATED THE PLO REP, EZZEDINE KALAK, AND ONE OF HIS ASSISTANTS. TWO TERRORISTS WERE ARRESTED. THE INCIDENT TOOK PLACE WHILE THE POLICE ANTI-TERRORIST SQUAD WAS ATTENDING THE FUNERAL OF ITS COLLEAGUE WHO HAD BEEN SLAIN AT THE IRAQI EMBASSY. THE FOREIGN AND INTERIOR MINISTRIES IMMEDIATELY ISSUED STATEMENTS THAT TERRORISM OF ANY KIND WOULD NOT BE TOLERATED IN FRANCE.

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4. THE EFFECT OF THESE INCIDENTS HAS BEEN A STRONG FEELING OF POPULAR REVULSION AT THE PROSPECT THAT FRANCE IS BECOMING AN ARENA FOR TERRORIST ACTIVITIES. THE PRESS HAS POINTED OUT THAT IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS 11 FOREIGN EMISSARIES IN PARIS HAVE BEEN ATTACKED, AND EIGHT HAVE BEEN KILLED. FURTHERMORE, THE GENERAL EXPECTATION IS THAT SUCH ATTACKS WILL CONTINUE AS VARIOUS FACTIONS CARRY OUT THEIR VENDETTAS, AND THAT IT IS VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO PREVENT THEM.

5. WHILE IT IS POSSIBLE THAT A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF HOSTILITY TOWARD TERRORIST ACTIVITY MAY RUB OFF ON
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THE ARAB IMAGE HERE, THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT, AND TO A LARGE EXTENT THE INFORMED PUBLIC AS WELL, IS WELL AWARE OF THE NECESSITY FOR ENERGY-POOR FRANCE TO MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE ARAB STATES. IRAQ IS A PRIME EXAMPLE; IT SUPPLIES ALMOST 18 PERCENT OF FRANCE'S OIL IMPORTS (17.8 MILLION TONS IN 1977).
THUS WE ANTICIPATE THAT, DESPITE THE EMOTIONAL POPULAR REACTION TO TERRORIST ACTIVITIES HERE, THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT WILL DO EVERYTHING IT CAN TO KEEP RELATIONS WITH THE ARABS ON AN EVEN KEEL, AND TO PREVENT TERRORIST INCIDENTS FROM BECOMING POLITICAL ISSUES.
AS NOTED IN REFTTEL, OUR OFFICIAL CONTACTS HAVE CONFIRMED THIS ATTITUDE.
HARTMAN

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